1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

throughout the emirate. Roads were built connecting the district capitals to Maiduguri, the major city of Bornu and to one another, and district capital markets came to be among the most active because of the increased population in the district capitals not producing their own goods.

In the economic sphere the colonial era sounded a death knell for the Saharan trade. A dribble of caravan trade still exists, but it was the express policy of the British to face Bornu around and turn its trade toward Nigeria and the Nigerian ports. Caravans were heavily taxed, and European trading companies were encouraged to move into Bornu and start circulating cash and cheap import goods. These few large English and French trading companies encouraged the appearance of a corps of Levantine traders who are ubiquitous in West Africa. They take credit from the large companies, giving it out again to large numbers of Africans who buy and sell for them. By the second world war ground-nuts were a well established cash crop, marketed through these companies although controlled by the government. When inflationary boom prices for ground-nuts hit Bornu after the war, the people were ready to take full advantage of it and there was a surge upwards of consumer buying, so that radios, bicycles, and many other industrial commodities became part of local life. On the other hand, judging by the surprise registered in the annual reports of the colonical officials, the government was a little stunned at first to know what to do with its increased revenues. However a host of new improvements began to be an accepted part of life in the public sector, just as new import items became common to the private sector. The most recent of such changes has already been mentioned in Chapter 1. After independence, the digging of deep wells increased the cattle population enormously and has provided a basis for further development in the area. This, then, is the Bornu background. It is a long and eventful one—and the people are proud of it. For an anthropologist, one of the most intriguing questions to ask is "why"—why has Bornu lasted so long in this area? Why has it adapted so well to modern times? It has absorbed Shehu Laminu's destruction of the Sefuwa dynasty, Rabeh's conquest, the colonial overlordship, and national independence in its calm stride. Its leaders and its people are remarkably stable—yet not enslaved by tradition. Indeed they strive to change and develop Bornu and their future is a bright and hopeful one. In the chapters to follow I hope to provide answers to these questions in order that we may ask them again after considering in more detail the quality of life in Bornu.

Lastly gum arabic, which is the base from which gum drops
137 are made, is collected from the kolkol tree (Acacia arabica).
222 The trees grow wild, and are fairly common in the area of Geidam. The villagers collect the solidified resin and sell the
[434] gum arabic to the companies. This is a secondary source of cash, and the distribution of the trees is fairly limited.

[262] Some species of plants are gathered for food. The leaves of the kuka tree are the most important, and are commonly used
224 in food preparation. Hunting is of minor importance. Full-time hunters are almost never found. In the larger villages and towns organized hunts are carried out by the young men. In such cases the game, typically gazelle and guinea fowl, are
226 surrounded and brought down by thrown sticks. Fishing is carried out in the rivers and in Lake Chad. Fish are caught by a variety of means--they are trapped in large woven traps, netted, and hooked, and in Lake Chad larger species are harpooned.
[262] Fish are an important food source for communities on the shores
[184] of rivers and lakes, but are not generally important for the Kanuri as a whole.

438 Trade always has played an important part in the Kanuri
443 economy, and this would naturally follow in a society where
[433] rural-urban distinctions are centuries old. The kasugu, or
369 market, is a central part of every Kanuri town. The Kanuri
[366] market is primarily and almost exclusively a local market, where village farmers can sell agricultural produce and buy the products made by artisans of the town. In addition, limited regional exchange is effected through the market. External

External

443 438 366 [439] trade, involving groundnuts, hides and skins, and European manufactured goods is not effected in the market-place. Every sizeable town has a weekly market day. Large towns have daily markets as well. Adjacent towns have staggered market days, forming loose market rings which link a number of towns. Itinerant middlemen can travel from one market town to the next with their goods, and a town is frequently known by the name of its market day, and will be referred to as "Saturday." [484] [369] People from small surrounding villages without markets will come into town on a market day from as far away as ten miles on foot, and from still further if they are fortunate enough to own a donkey or a horse.

B. Larger Features of the Political Organization.

1. The Structure of the Empire in Pre-Contact Times.

175 643 The dynasty of the Sefs came to an end in 1846, when the last Mai or king of Bornu, Mai Ibrahim, along with his son Ali Dalatumi, was killed. In their place ruled the son of Mohammad el Amin el Kanemi, the first of the Shehus, and the founder [178] of the dynasty which today "rules" Bornu. Though a dynasty which had ruled Bornu for a thousand years had come to an end, the structure of the empire seems to have remained essentially the same.

[192] Shehu Omar, the son of el Kanemi, took the title of Shehu from the Arabic title, Sheikh. His father had been a Kanembu, from Kanem which lies north and east of Bornu. El Kanemi brought

342 This is one of two house types which the Kanuri build, and is predominant in the villages. There are several variants of this house type. The walls may be of mud bricks, or they may be of
363 woven mats. The first is of course more permanent. Paths separate groups of compounds, and larger streets divide the village. Trees are allowed to grow within the village to provide
361 shade, but other vegetation is removed. Since Bornu is a flat plain, the huts of the small villages, amid the shade trees, jut out from the surrounding cleared landscape in dry season and are visible from a distance.

632 [366] The towns are market centers, and frequently also administrative centers. Towns of some size are divided into wards, and each ward will have its own Lowan. The wards (nguro) are
632 565 556 342 in turn made up of compounds. In the towns, stratification in the social structure is pronounced and wealth differences between heads of families may be great. This is reflected in size of compound and in house type. While the house type and compound of the poor commoner (talaka) in the town may be identical with that of the typical villager (compound walls made of sogdis enclosing a plot on which is built a single round-walled, thatched hut), the compounds of wealthy and important men are enclosed in walls of mud bricks some ten feet high, and the single entrance (chinna) may be framed in an impressive archway. The area of the compounds of important men may be several thousand square yards, and there may be upwards of twenty houses within. The predominant house type of the wealthy man in the

632 366 368 Two other foci of the Kanuri town are the market-place and the central mosque. The market-place is of course the center for all local trade, and on the particular market day of a town, activities center in the market, which is alive with people. On Friday, the central mosque, where people gather to pray, becomes the communal center. Throughout the week the compound of the Ajia (the Ajari), should the town be the administrative center of a district, is the focus of bureaucratic activity. In addition, activity centers around other public buildings: the court, the school, the dispensary, the public reading room, etc.

369 632 463 The three foci of the Kanuri town indicated above, the Ajari, the market-place, and the mosque, are of themselves strong arguments for the urban nature of the Kanuri town. Each is typically the center of an urban activity and urban occupations. The Ajia has, under him, a range of bureaucratic specialists: the Alkali, the Chief Scribe, the Treasurer, the Department of Police, the school-teachers and dispenser. The mosque is representative of the various religious specialists: the Imam, and the many malams of the town. The market-place typifies commercial activity, which more than anything else is characteristic of urban life, with its various specialists in trade and in crafts.

E. Social Organization

611 171 182 Unlike the majority of African societies, the Kanuri do not have unilineal descent. As Meyer Fortes notes, "The more

633 cause it lies on the main highway connecting Ft. Lamy with Jos.
131 Nguru, in the northwestern corner of the province, is the second
491
[496] largest city in Bornu, and is particularly important because it marks the end of the rail line extending from Lagos via Jos. Geidam is strategically located so that it benefits from trade with both. (see Figure 1) Unpaved roads connect Geidam with Nguru, directly east, and with Maiduguri, to the southeast. It would be about 130 miles from Geidam to Maiduguri if one went by the shortest possible route. The road leads directly south from Geidam, however, and then directly east, and the total dis-
131 tance covered amounts to 170 miles. Though distances are great
49 and the condition of the roads is very poor, trade is dependent
438 on trucks which are the life-line of the country. Goods come into Geidam by truck from both Maiduguri and Nguru. They are then distributed throughout the countryside by merchants and tradesmen, using camels and donkeys to transport their goods.
[366] Since no roads at all lead north into Niger and the Kanuri villages north of Geidam, nor do roads lead east along the Yobe River to the villages and towns there, Geidam is an important regional center of trade and commerce. Its geographic location is therefore an important factor in determining the nature of the community.

B. The Physical Nature of the Community.

491 The road from Maiduguri joins that from Nguru a few miles
[366] west of the town (see Figure 3). The sole road connecting Gei-

GEIDAM

491 dam with other towns first skirts the several canteens of the
[366] European trading companies as it enters the town, proceeds across a wide open area of a mile until it reaches the town
361 proper, and terminates in a parking area. The town itself has no wall, and no sharp boundary line marks its outer edges. In three directions, south, east, and north, the town is bounded by fields of millet, which begin immediately after the outlying compounds end. To the west of the town lies the river Yobe, but a strip of land about half a mile in width separates the
[249] river from the edges of the town. In that area are to be found
[134] garden plots, since the land along the river is particularly
[366] fertile, and, closer to the town, stock yards, the slaughtering
[233] area, and the cattle market, with its pens. Northwest of the town is the tiny adjoining village of Koldi.

361 Southwest of the town, and south of the cattle market, is
648 the Government Reserve Area, a section of land reserved by the colonial administration in every sizeable town and city where Europeans are supposed to reside. It is physically set apart from the African town. In this case, the sole government building is the Touring Rest house, over a mile from the town, high on the banks overlooking the Yobe River. Another larger house, remnant of a time when an army unit was stationed here years ago, was rebuilt during the course of the year, and occupied by the Governor-General of Nigeria, Sir James Robertson, during a brief stay in Geidam. The Government Rest House is occupied by British administrative officials in their tours of inspection

[GEIDAM]

361 648 through the district. There are no European officials permanently stationed in Geidam, though a young Assistant District Officer on his first tour of duty did spend three months in Geidam [366] in the course of the author's year of residence there. Along with the Government Rest House, the Government Reserve Area includes the canteens of the various European trading companies who have offices in Geidam, and the houses of their managers. 361 177 [439] There are six trading companies doing business in Geidam, three under the management of Europeans, and three under African managers. The three Europeans, two Cypriotes and one Greek (formerly a Swiss, then replaced by a Greek), represent the entire White population of Geidam. Two operate branch offices of larger companies; one is in business for himself. The three African managers are in charge of branches of large trading companies, two British (United Africa Company and John Holt) and one French company (Société de la Compagnie de Ouest Afrique). Thus, the small European population of the town, and the agents of the Western world who make their presence most felt, the colonial administration and the trading companies, are physically removed from the people of Geidam. They come periodically to do what they must in the town, and return to their own sections, and people of the town go out to them to deal with them. There is no opportunity for continual, indiscriminate interaction between [114] the Kanuri populace and these agents of the Western world. In order to do anthropological field work in such a situation, it became immediately apparent that it would be necessary to live

[GEIDAM]

366 The Geidam market-place represents one such focus of communal activity. It is an area 186 yards by 150 yards, with rows of permanent stalls made of grass mats, and occasional trees. 443 People are present in the market every day, buying and selling, but these are few in number and are limited largely to sellers of food staples. Wednesday is market day in Geidam, and on that day, thousands of people crowd the paths and the stalls, chatting, bargaining, buying and selling. People come into Geidam from a radius of ten to fifteen miles to attend the Wednesday market; and literally everyone in the town visits the market-place on market day at some point during the day.

361 632 As was mentioned earlier, every Kanuri town is built in a "U" pattern around an open plaza, the dandal. The over-all U-pattern is still apparent in Geidam, but since Geidam is a large town whose growth has been uneven, expansion has destroyed the [604] symmetry of the physical plan of the town. The dandal is still very much in evidence, and at its eastern face is the Ajari, the [351] compound of the District Head (Ajia) of Geidam. The dandal leads directly to the gate, or chinna of his compound, which forms a second important focus of communal activity. Much administrative activity occurs in the cleared area before the chinna of the [527] Ajia's compound. In addition, much ceremonial activity, involving displays of horsemanship by the men serving under the Ajia, [526] takes place before the chinna of his house. Many forms of recre- [535] ation, dancing and wrestling, are also held at the head of the dandal, while multitudes of townspeople gather along the borders of the dandal to watch.

[GEIDAM]

632 river. The compounds of several wealthy Hausa traders face the
[563] market-place in the western end of Lowan Kolo Kolo's ward. The
[463] butchers, who are almost all Hausa and have a Hausa head-man, are within Lowan Kolo Kolo's ward but fall under the jurisdiction of the Hausa Lowan.

632 563 The third ward making up the town of Geidam has only a sprinkling of Kanuri living there. It is the most populous ward of the three and is predominantly Hausa. Its Lowan is Serakin Garba, a prominent member of the Hausa community. This ward has been growing most rapidly in recent years, and the direction of expansion has been south and west, where whole new sections have grown up. Along the western border of the town, stretching southward, live all the Ibos and Yorubas, Southern Nigerians and predominantly Christian, numbering several hundred.
[366] A string of small canteens run by Ibos and Yorubas faces the
[368] western border. In this ward is to be found the church for
[273] Christian members of the Geidam community, and the Charity Hotel where beer is sold.

632 563 Ethnic stratification is very marked in Geidam. All southerners, Ibos and Yorubas, live in the Hausa ward along with almost the entire Hausa population of Geidam. Only a scattering
632 563 167 of Hausas are found in the Kanuri wards. Within the Kanuri wards are found small clusters of other tribes, notably Bouzous and Dagora, serfs of the Tuareg who come down into the settled plains area to towns like Geidam, where they work at menial jobs for periods of time. When they have accumulated some money they re-

101
103 The locality within the Emirate in which concentrated field work has been carried out is Magumeri situated about thirty-five miles northwest of Maiduguri on a motor road. Magumeri is the name of
162 both the district and its capital town. The area has a much higher
634 proportion of Kanuri than the Emirate in general. In Magumeri district ninety-six per cent of the population are Kanuri while this is true of only sixty-two per cent in the Emirate as a whole.

162 The district contains 52,000 people (1952) and has an area
634 of approximately four hundred square miles. Within its boundaries
632 there are sixteen village area units including the Magumeri village area. This village area has a population of 4,200 of which roughly 2,000 live in the village proper and 2,200 live in hamlets within the village area.

When compared to other rural district capitals in the Emirate, Magumeri village area is slightly smaller than the average. Excluding the two large cities of Nguru and Maiduguri, the population range for district capitals varies from 1,400 to 11,000, and the average is 5,100 persons. Seven district capitals are smaller and eleven are
[166] larger than Magumeri village area. It is reported by long term residents to have been a much larger village at one time but to have been losing population steadily over the past twenty years to Maiduguri.

361
621 Like all other Kanuri settlements, Magumeri is built in a U shape around a central plaza (dandal) open at the west end with the house of the highest ranking person at the east end facing west. Lesser political leaders in the village have their own smaller plazas, again
366 with their houses at the east end facing west. Another feature common to all Kanuri settlements is the placing of the butcher's section at the southwest side of a town or market so that the prevailing winds from
000 the northeast carry the odour away. Like other district capitals,

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[361]
[366]

five to six miles from the other. Magumeri and Ngubura are market towns on the main road to the urban center, while Chingowa has no large weekly market and is off the motor road except for a few months in the wet season when its higher position on a ridge places it on the route of the rainy season road.

Frequency Distribution of Wives Among 78 Male Household Heads

Number of wives	0	1	2	3	4		
Number of males	6	33	31	5	3	Total	78 males
Total number of females	0	33	62	15	12	"	122 females

Thus a total of 78 males had between them 122 women as wives or an average of 1.56 women per man (polygynous households in sample = 50.0%).

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[128]

Although it is probable in the extreme that many of the household heads questioned have since changed either the number and/or the persons of their wives, it is felt that this distribution is a representative and reliable description of Kanuri polygyny.

The quantitative data given gives strength to the qualitative observation that it is just as common to see a man with two wives as it [184] is with one in peasant households. This means that we may evaluate Kanuri polygyny as a well-integrated cultural element that is not only practiced by the wealthy and the powerful, but which has real meaning and behavioural consequences throughout all levels of the society.

593 In the marriage relationship itself, cultural tradition directs that the male play the dominant role. He gives his wife (or wives) their market money weekly, their millet for cooking from his granaries, and among high status persons, he usually keeps them secluded as much as possible in his compound. He supposedly makes the major decisions concerning himself, his wife and children, and their

433 of distribution of goods and services is a necessity for the operation
44
[441] of the social system. In Bornu this takes the form of a market economy and a specialist occupation of wholesale and retail trade.

443 Traditionally markets are held weekly (the Kanuri have a
805 seven day week), and are referred to locally by the name of the day on which they are held. This week day name is extended as a second name for the market town itself, so that both the town and the market are known by two names. Thus in Magumeri a man may say, "I am going to Thursday, this Monday", and his hearers understand that on Monday he is going to Ngubura, the town that holds its market on Thursday. This is much less common for towns and cities which have major political functions, such as district capitals, or the capital city of Bornu.

443 Markets in rural Bornu are best described as interlocking
366 series of cycles which overlap but are never completely congruent for any two market towns. A market cycle includes all the markets which the people of a town attend in their own locality. In Magumeri people who regularly attend markets go to Ngubura (five miles south) on Thursday, Ardoram (seven miles north) on Monday, and their own Magumeri market on Sunday. There are smaller markets in towns without motor road facilities on Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday, which are attended less frequently and these are all within a radius of five to ten miles of Magumeri. People in Ardoram have their own cycle which interlocks with the Magumeri one, but includes markets which Magumeri people rare-
443 ly visit, especially to the north. Thus Kachella, a seller of tobacco
366 flowers in Magumeri, has many good friends in Ngubura and Ardoram where
572 he attends markets regularly. He stays with these friends on occasion if he remains overnight or arrives early for a market. They, in their turn, visit and sometimes stay overnight with him when they come to

443 Magumeri for the Sunday market. Kachella feels that these people are his
366 friends. On the other hand, although Kachella's market friends to the
572 north are known to and known by his market friends to the south, they are not "friends" to one another. Again, the friends to the south have their own friends farther south at markets which Kachella rarely visits. Thus market cycles are overlapping, interlocking networks of social and economic relations which vary for each market town.

443 Beside the interlocking cycle of local markets, each town
366 and/or cycle has some kind of link with a larger center of the export-
439 import trade, the two largest being Maiduguri in the south, and Nguru
[437] (the rail head) in the extreme northwest of the Emirate. Traditionally trading caravans set out from Maiduguri once every two weeks for remote market towns. Although less important today, these can still be
[494] seen. If there are roads, lorries bring people and goods from the larger centres early on market day and return at night or the next day with rural purchasers and travellers returning to or visiting the large urban centre.

443 One of the chief features resulting from this system of
366 distribution is that markets on motor roads assume primary importance
494 while those back in the bush are becoming secondary, and are less well attended. However, the interlocking nature of the rural market cycles makes for ease of communication and distribution in the region as a whole, and this is accentuated by the direct links with the centre and the modern use of lorries as the primary means of transport.

366 The relation between market towns and population size is
494 indirect. Very few market towns in Bornu have population aggregates
161 of under one thousand, while the presence of a market and, more im-
[162] portantly, a motor road tend to stimulate population growth. Thus pop-

366 494 161 ulation growth in itself may be said to lead to markets, and markets and transportation facilities, when present, "feed back" to stimulate further growth.

443 494 484 Markets, especially those on motor roads, tend to set the one pattern or rhythm of intersettlement communication and travel. Thus if Bukar or Magumeri wishes to take several bags of millet to Yerwa (Maiduguri) he knows that he can get a lorry at the Thursday, Sunday or Monday market, which can take him and his goods to the capital. Again if Bukar's sister is coming to visit him from the capital or some other distant town in Bornu, she will arrive on a market day. If a man's wife wishes to divorce him, or he her, she must wait until market day to leave him in order to obtain "proper" transportation back to her relatives if they live in some distant part of the state. Thus the market cycle plus the presence of lorries and roads determines a large part of the temporal movement of rural life. This, of course, adds zest, interest and excitement to market day. Beyond the temporal categorization of events, markets are also major sources of news and gossip about politics, marriages, births, circumcisions and deaths. Pagans brew beer for sale on the local market day, and gamblers hold (illicit) card games in the nearby bush area. Gambling, strangers, new bits of gossip, perhaps a new woman or two, drummers and entertainers, all contribute and create not just an ordinary day for buying and selling goods but a festive occasion which is regarded as a break or relief in the daily monotony of rural life.

443 692 [632] Each local market has its head man (mala kasube) to whom disputes are referred. If he is unable to settle the disagreement, then the disputants are taken to either the Lawan (Village Head) of the market town, or the judge, if the town boasts a court. In Maiduguri, there

438 guri from Jos, Kano and other parts of Nigeria.
442

Ajimi regularly obtains his nuts from four of these traders, all of whom he visits, and all of whose goods he inspects and prices before he decides where to place his order. He strongly asserts that his primary criterion in making the decision as to where to buy is the quality of the nuts. Two of the suppliers are Kanuri, one of whom owns his own lorries; the other two are Hausa. Ajimi has gone to other suppliers in the past but could not, at the time of this study, remember their names. By going to the same supplier over and over again with his uncle's money, he builds up confidence, and has on several occasions obtained an extra kwando on credit from one of the Kanuri suppliers, the profits ofwhich he kept entirely for himself.

435 Although there is some variation in price, it generally
438 occurs at the retail level, while for bulk shipments cash prices re-
442 main fairly constant, and it is quantity which varies with supply, quality and demand. Thus £20.0.0 is generally the price for a kwando of kola-nuts (a large rafia rope-bound package). A kwando contains seven thousand to eight thousand nuts depending upon their size, quality and the state of the market at any particular time. After returning to Magumeri, Ajimi generally gets back about £32.0.0 per kwando and returns the money, plus half the profits (i.e. £6.0.0) to Alkali Bukar. This buying and selling procedure takes him between thirteen to seventeen days or roughly two weekly market cycles.

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438 He wholesales his nuts in the Magumeri area and regularly
442 attends the Magumeri (Sunday), Gamiram (Thursday),(1) and Ardoram (Monday)
[366] markets.

(1) He avoids the more usual Thursday market at Ngubura and attends the Gajiram market because it has no motor road, and he finds less competition and a smaller number of kola-nut wholesalers there than at Ngubura.